

The Way Forward: Through Repentance - 2 Corinthians 7:5–13a – 9/13/26

Purpose

To help us understand repentance as a life-giving return to God. Paul shows us that godly sorrow is not condemnation, but a pathway back to joy, healing, and renewed obedience.

Icebreaker

When you hear the word “repentance,” what feelings or images come to mind? Why do you think many people hear repentance as shame rather than invitation?

Scripture - Primary Text: 2 Corinthians 7:5–13a

Additional Texts: Psalm 51:1–17; 1 Samuel 15; Matthew 27:3–5; 1 John 1:8–9

Observations

- Paul had written a hard letter to the Corinthian church after serious conflict and sin had gone unaddressed.
- The Corinthians were grieved by Paul’s letter, but their grief led to repentance.
- Paul distinguishes between **godly grief**, which leads to repentance and life, and **worldly grief**, which leads to death.
- Their repentance produced visible fruit: earnestness, eagerness, indignation, fear, longing, zeal, and a desire to see things made right.
- Paul rejoiced because the painful process brought comfort, restoration, and renewed health to the body.

Core Teaching

Repentance is not self-hatred, shame, or trying to feel bad enough for God to forgive us. Repentance is genuine sorrow over sin that turns us back toward God by faith in what Christ has done for us.

First, **repentance begins with godly sorrow**. Paul did not want to crush the Corinthians, but he loved them too much to leave destructive patterns unaddressed. Their sorrow mattered because it told the truth. Godly sorrow is like pain in the body: it alerts us that something needs attention. Without sorrow, we often ignore, numb, or explain away what needs to change.

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Second, **godly sorrow moves us toward God, not away from Him**. Worldly sorrow collapses inward, hides, isolates, or despairs. Judas felt regret, but it did not move him toward reconciliation. David, by contrast, owned his sin before God. Godly sorrow draws us toward mercy.

Third, **repentance produces real change**. The Corinthians did not merely feel bad; they acted. Real repentance names sin honestly. It does not hide behind vague language, shift blame, or say, “Mistakes were made.” It accepts responsibility and turns in a new direction.

Fourth, **repentance restores joy and health in the body**. Paul was comforted because the painful process helped restore the relationship. This is what we long for at CBC — not shallow peace that avoids truth, but deeper peace through humility, confession, forgiveness, and renewed obedience.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between godly sorrow and shame?
2. Why is sorrow sometimes necessary before real change can happen?
3. Where do you see the temptation to numb, ignore, or explain away conviction?
4. What does it look like to move toward God when you feel sorrow over sin?
5. Why is vague confession less helpful than naming sin honestly?
6. How might repentance lead CBC toward deeper joy, trust, and health?

Digging Deeper

Read 2 Corinthians 7:10–11. What fruit did repentance produce in the Corinthians?

Read Psalm 51. What does David’s prayer teach us about honest confession?

Prayer

Father, give us godly sorrow that leads to life. Help us not to hide, numb, blame, or despair. Teach us to name what is true, receive Your mercy, and turn back to You. Restore joy, trust, and health in us and in our church family. In Jesus’ name - Amen.